



**ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LAW
COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS**

GOVERNOR JANET NAPOLITANO
REMARKS, AS PREPARED

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Dean White, members of the faculty, honored family members and guests – and the 2003 graduates of the Arizona State University College of Law.

Thank you very much for the honor of sharing this day with you.

A few weeks ago, I attended the 20-year reunion of my law school class at the University of Virginia, and we remembered our commencement speaker, sort of. Truth be told, while we recalled that a U.S. senator spoke, we couldn't remember a word he said.

Hopefully, I'll leave a little better impression with you. I'll be back for your 20-year reunion to give you a quiz, so take notes.

For your sakes, I also hope the most vivid memory of your graduation day is different than mine was. Our ceremony was outdoors, and wouldn't it be just our luck that it rained – heavily. We didn't mind the rain – until after the ceremony, when we discovered that the dye from our gowns had run, staining our clothes and our skin bright purple.

I'm sure the gown makers wished they hadn't sold that batch to a bunch of law school graduates. Not long after passing the bar exam, several of my classmates filed a class-action lawsuit. Each of us ended up with a couple hundred bucks and a really a good story to tell.

That said, may your graduation day stories be just as colorful – no pun intended. One thing is for sure, though. Your newfound status as law school alumni will ring hollow for the next few months. Frankly, except for your freedom from attending class, you'll scarcely notice a difference in your lives. After all, you'll still be studying regularly for the bar exam, and the Alumni Association will see to it that you continue to write checks to the university.

Study hard for the bar exams. I wish I could tell you not to sweat it, but who am I kidding? Until you take "The Big Quiz" you will be terrorized by it. I remember my bar exam experience. And frankly, it's still too upsetting to talk about.

While you'll soon have the bar exam behind you, I'm sorry to say that you'll never outrun the Alumni Association. The CIA could learn a thing or two from these people. Take my advice: just give them some money, and no one gets hurt.

But enough about all that – today is a day to celebrate the completion of three years of study groups, lectures, all-nighters and exams. That part of your legal training is over, and for that you should be very proud.

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As I stand here, I am struck by the juxtaposition of graduates and faculty. Today, you are mirror images of each other. In the faculty's mirror, they look at you and see the best of themselves in your successful training. To the faculty here today, I say – job well done.

And as you look back at the faculty, you no doubt see glimpses of who you hope to become one day. To you I say – get to work. You have big shoes to fill.

To be successful, you need to master a world whose progress is marked not just by change itself, but by the ever-accelerating rate of change.



We have seen this coming for centuries, but only now does its pace begin to startle us. In the span of a single lifetime, we now bear witness to changes in our world that once took a century or more to complete.

The result can be a frightening and confusing miasma of disjointed, discordant newness. The quicker we can make order and sense of this change, the better off we will be.

As the celebrated futurist Alvin Toffler once said, “In describing today’s accelerating changes, the media fire blips of unrelated information at us... Popular forecasters present lists of unrelated trends, without any model to show us their interconnections ... As a result, change comes to be seen as anarchic, even lunatic.”

Many professions, including the lawyers of tomorrow, will be needed to make sense of this rapid rate of change. In particular, lawyers will do well to prepare for three areas of fundamental change that promise to affect the entire legal profession throughout this new century:

The first area is the current sea change in American criminal justice, brought on by everything associated with the fall of the Twin Towers. That terrible moment changed everything.

The events of September 11, 2001 continue to quicken the evolution of criminal justice in America like no other single force. Those of you planning to practice that specialty of law are headed into a career full of fundamental change from 20th Century criminal law.

New and compelling arguments for enhancing police power to better secure the people will continue to collide head-on with the civil liberties of “We, the people.”

Your job will be to sort out where to alter the law – and where to leave it alone. As the British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead once surmised, “The art of progress is to preserve order amid change – and to preserve change amid order.”

Nowhere is that truth more poignant than in the second area of area of change that will confront you – technology.

Advances in medicine, science and computer technology will continue to converge, with results so spectacular they will exceed our imagination to predict them.

Consider that 1.4 million years passed between when our ancestors harnessed fire and when they discovered the wheel. By comparison, it took just 5,400 years for humanity to combine fire and wheels to create the internal combustion-driven automobile. From there, it took less than a century devise how to use fire to loft men and their wheels to the moon for a space-aged buggy ride across the Sea of Tranquility.



And when you consider that today's Palm Pilots offer as much computing power as what was used to send the entire Apollo 11 spacecraft to the moon and back, it becomes clear that the speed with which our world reinvents itself is becoming astonishing.

And as these changes come, faster and faster, someone needs to make sense of them. In a nation of laws, much of this falls to lawyers.

You will be asked to sort out the strengths and limits of people's right to privacy at a time when everything that can be known about us – from our online shopping history right down to our DNA – can be digitally quantified, tracked, stored, and put to someone else's use.

Technological advances are pushing the issue of privacy to the forefront of 21st Century constitutional debate. As this happens, you will be standing right on the razor's edge, armed with your legal training and your love of the law.

The third area of change that will shape your career is in the area of community growth, especially here in Arizona.

This is no longer that little Western frontier of limitless bounty. We are a state of 5.5 million people and growing – rapidly. The land and water available for development are finite commodities, and the same can be said of nature's ability to sustain our growing presence.

In your lifetimes, Arizona's communities will grow to sizes that boggle the mind. By the time you retire, in mid-century, population estimates put the Phoenix metropolitan area at 17.4 million people, triple the current population of the entire state. Pima County is expected to double its population, and greater Arizona will simply brace for the inevitable encroachment of the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas.

More people here will mean more opportunities – and more challenges. On the one hand, we will push the boundaries of human knowledge with the T-Gen project and the research of our great universities. On the other hand, we will continue to develop our deserts and mountain wildlands. And while we expand our international trade capacities, sprawl will continue to alter our urban climates and soak up available water.

The yin-yang nature of our growth will be a pivotal challenge for our communities. How we chose to approach these issues will shape the 21st Century definition of Arizona.

So, too, will our changing demographics. The rapid growth of our Latino population will change our culture, our language and our perspectives, as Arizona comes closer to the American ideal of a true cultural mosaic of equality and diversity.

Through all of this change – criminological, technological, and demographic – Arizona is going to be one of the best places in the country in which to live and be a lawyer, because



at the center of all these changes we will need smart artisans of the law to make order and sense of the chaos.

So, as you make your way into the legal world, I have two simple recommendations. This being a commencement speech, I feel somewhat obligated to impart a pearl or two of wisdom.

My first request is that you stay here to practice law. Arizona needs you, and this is a great state in which to live and work. I should know. At various points in my life, I have been raised or educated in New York, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, California, and Virginia.

But when I was in your shoes, when I was fresh out of college with a law degree in one hand and a road atlas in the other, I chose Arizona to practice law, and I have never regretted it. This is a vibrant state that continues to grow in its size, complexity and quality of life. So, hang out your shingle here and help make Arizona an even better place to live.

My second request is this: Wherever you practice law, be sure to use your profession to improve your community and those who live in it. If you have chosen to practice law purely for financial gain, or to fulfill someone else's expectations of success, then you have missed the point entirely.

As the noted author Anna Quindlan once remarked, "If your success is not on your own terms, if it looks good to the world but does not feel good in your heart, it is not success at all."

To know the law is to know how to make this world better through its proper application. And to practice law properly is to engage in public service of the highest order.

Never forget that being an attorney is not just a job. It is a calling, a way of life. Partnership in a law firm should not be the end goal. It should be the means by which you empower yourself to engage in much grander pursuits on humanity's behalf.

Pro bono work is not the dreaded chore of the modern lawyer – it is your sacred duty. It is your privilege. And performing community service means more than exercising checkbook philanthropy. It means volunteering on nonprofit boards, championing local causes that need your help. To some of you, it will mean running for public office. Trust me – it's not as bad as it looks.

For the future, I say do all of these things. Do them well. And do them right here in Arizona. For tomorrow, I say good luck on the bar examination. And for today, I simply say congratulations, ladies and gentlemen. You did it.